

Monday's Sports In Brief

By The Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) — Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco signed a new contract Monday worth \$120.6 million over six years, making him the highest paid player in NFL history.

The Super Bowl MVP will receive a \$29 million signing bonus and \$52 million in guaranteed money. He will be paid \$51 million over the first two years of the deal.

"It's not really about the money, it's about that respect,' Flacco said minutes after signing.

The 28-year-old Flacco is the first starting quarterback in NFL history to make the playoffs in each of his first five seasons. He's led the Ravens to nine wins over that span, tying Tom Brady for most among quarterbacks in the first five years of a career.

NEW YORK (AP) — Darrelle Revis is moving closer to getting back on the football field.

Whether that's with the New York Jets next season remains to be seen.

Jets general manager John Idzik said during a conference call with season ticket holders that there is encouraging news from doctors on Revis' rehabilitation from a torn ligament in his left knee.

“By all accounts, by his doctor’s accounts, he’s doing very well,” Idzik said. “By their estimation, he’s ahead of schedule.”

But Idzik wouldn’t address the cornerback’s murky contract situation or reveal plans for Tim Tebow, though he appeared to hint that the quarterback could be in the mix at the position this offseason.

Tebow is still expected to be traded or released in the coming weeks after one disappointing season in which he spent most of his time on the sideline.

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL deadline for placing franchise tags on players has passed, with only eight given the tag by their teams for next season.

Dallas linebacker/defensive end Anthony Spencer, Kansas City offensive tackle Branden Albert and Miami defensive tackle Randy Starks were the latest to be tagged.

The other tagged players are Buffalo safety Jairus Byrd, Chicago defensive tackle Henry Melton, Cincinnati defensive end Michael Johnson, Denver offensive tackle Ryan Clady and Indianapolis punter Pat McAfee.

All eight are non-exclusive franchise players.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Gonzaga, the small Northwest school known for big NCAA tournament wins, is No. 1 in The Associated Press’ Top 25 for the first time.

Riding the best record in Division I at 29-2, the Bulldogs took advantage of Indiana’s loss to

Minnesota last week. The Bulldogs switched places with the Hoosiers, advancing from No. 2 to move comfortably into the No. 1 spot.

Gonzaga is the fifth school to hold the top spot this season. Indiana was the preseason No. 1 and on top for nine other weeks. Duke, Louisville and Michigan were the other No. 1s.

Duke stayed at No. 3 with five first-place votes. Kansas and Georgetown both jumped two spots to fourth and fifth.

In the women's poll, Baylor remained No. 1 for a ninth straight week while Toledo entered the Top 25 for the first time since 2001. Notre Dame, Connecticut, Stanford and California rounded out the top five.

AUTO RACING

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — The National Rifle Association is taking its relationship with racing to a new level as the title sponsor of a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race.

The deal with Texas Motor Speedway comes at a time when the NRA is involved in a renewed debate on gun violence in the wake of the December shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

"It's not about politics. It's about sports marketing," TMS president Eddie Gossage said after the announcement of the one-year agreement with the NRA that includes a renewal option.

The April 13 race at Texas, the first scheduled night race in the Cup Series this season, will be known as the NRA 500.

PRO BASKETBALL

ATLANTA (AP) — Basketball hall of famer Michael Jordan asked a Georgia court to dismiss a paternity suit against him, calling it a “shameless, bad faith attempt to abuse the legal system.”

Jordan’s lawyer John Mayoue said in a document filed in Fulton County Superior Court that the six-time NBA champion is not the father of Pamela Y. Smith’s 16-year-old son. The paternity of the teen was “conclusively established” in divorce filings between Smith and her ex-husband, Jordan’s attorney wrote.

CLEVELAND (AP) — Knicks All-Star forward Carmelo Anthony injured his right knee in the second quarter of New York’s 102-97 win over the Cavaliers and did not return.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House says North Korea’s government should be focused on the well-being of its citizens, not on “celebrity sporting events” to entertain the country’s elite.

White House spokesman Jay Carney made the comments in response to a question about ex-NBA star Dennis Rodman’s recent visit to North Korea. Rodman watched a basketball game with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Flip Saunders is representing a group of investors that is interested in buying the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Wolves owner Glen Taylor confirmed that he has recently had discussions with Saunders on behalf of a group of owners who are looking to purchase the team. The identities of the investors were not immediately known.

BASEBALL

FUKUOKA, Japan (AP) — Jose Abreu hit a grand slam to help Cuba clobber China 12-0 and ensure that it would advance to the second round of the World Baseball Classic.

The Cuban infielder drove in five runs and the game at the Fukuoka Dome was called under the tournament's mercy rule after the seventh inning. Throughout the game, Cuba displayed the type of firepower that makes it one of the title contenders. TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Yankees general manager Brian Cashman broke his right leg and dislocated the ankle while skydiving in Florida.

Cashman jumped with the U.S. Army Golden Knights in a plane from Homestead Air Reserve Base outside Miami, a fundraiser for the Wounded Warrior Project. He was hurt on his second jump.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Manager Joe Torre put the United States baseball team through its only workout before the World Baseball Classic, a light, two-hour session at Salt River Fields, the spring training home of Arizona and Colorado.

They have exhibition games against the Chicago White Sox and Rockies before their opener Friday against Mexico at Chase Field.

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Robinson Cano's father says he expects the New York Yankees to re-sign their All-Star second baseman rather than let him leave through free agency after the season.

Jose Cano says he hopes Robinson will spend his entire career in New York. Jose thinks his son will get a six- or seven-year contract.

PRO HOCKEY

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The Carolina Hurricanes say goalie Cam Ward will miss six to eight weeks with a sprained knee ligament.

The team said the former All-Star goalie will not require surgery.

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The NHL suspended Buffalo's Patrick Kaleta for five games, its stiffest punishment of the season.

The Sabres forward shoved Rangers center Brad Richards from behind and into the boards on Sunday night.

The suspension will cost the gritty right winger more than \$72,000 in salary, and he won't be eligible to return until March 17, when the Sabres play at Washington.

GOLF

VIRGINIA WATER, England (AP) — The European Tour supports the proposed ban on the anchored putting stroke.

The European Tour says in a statement that it backs the Royal & Ancient and U.S. Golf Association on the rule change.

The PGA Tour and PGA of America have announced their opposition to banning the anchored stroke, the common method for using belly putters and long putters that are pressed against the chest.

TENNIS

NEW YORK (AP) — Rafael Nadal tested his left knee in a hard-court exhibition against Juan

Martin del Potro at Madison Square Garden on Monday night, losing 7-6 (4), 6-4 to the 2009 U.S. Open champ.

The 11-time Grand Slam champion from Spain moved without favoring the balky knee that sidelined him for seven months, wearing a wide smile while leaping for overheads and crashing into the wall behind the baseline chasing down a ball.

In the first match, top-ranked Serena Williams beat No. 2 Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 6-3.

Nadal will test the knee for real later this week when he plays in Indian Wells, his first hard-court tournament in his comeback.

NEW YORK (AP) — Five-time Grand Slam singles champion Martina Hingis leads the 2013 class for the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

The other new members of the Hall are Cliff Drysdale, Charlie Pasarell and Ion Tiriac. Australian player Thelma Coyne Long's election was announced earlier.

SOCCER

SAO PAULO (AP) — The 2014 World Cup in Brazil is set to be the first to offer special seats for obese fans.

The seats will be offered to conform to Brazilian legislation, although fans from other nations also will be entitled to them. FIFA told The Associated Press that it will be the “first time tickets for obese people are offered at a FIFA event.”

The tickets will also be available for the upcoming Confederations Cup, the World Cup warm-up

tournament that will be played in Brazil from June 15-30.

The World Cup Bill in Brazil requires that at least 1 percent of seats in each stadium are made available for disabled people, a category that includes the obese, wheelchair users and those with limited mobility.

David Beckham will play in an all-star game in China this year as part of a deal to help raise soccer's profile in the world's most populous country.

The former England captain has signed up to help boost soccer's appeal in China, which is trying to clean up its image by clamping down on corruption following a series of match-fixing scandals.

CYCLING

NEMOURS, France (AP) — Nacer Bouhanni of France overtook Italian veteran Alessandro Petacchi in a sprint to the line to win the first stage of the Paris-Nice race.

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